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News Release

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Alaska Region is set to take next steps in Ross-Adams Mine cleanup

Juneau, AK Dec. 2, 2020 - The USDA Forest Service Alaska Region has finalized a formal agreement for the cleanup of the Ross-Adams Mine following a 30-day comment period, during which, members of the public provided feedback on the agreement. This brings the agency another step closer to starting on-the-ground activities.

The Ross-Adams Mine is a former uranium mine located in the Tongass National Forest on Prince of Wales Island. Two mining companies have agreed to fund the cleanup project. Earlier this year, an Administrative Settlement Agreement and Order on Consent between the two companies and the Forest Service was made available for public feedback.

Throughout the 30-day comment period, which ended Aug. 7, the Forest Service received three comment letters and one email. While not required for this process, the Forest Service greatly values public feedback and responded to each commenting party. After careful review of each comment, the Forest Service determined that no changes to the agreement were required.

The final agreement requires the companies to conduct the on-the-ground site cleanup (Removal Action) and post-Removal Action monitoring for three years. After three years, the Forest Service will conduct monitoring. Currently, the companies are assessing what additional information they need to design the Removal Action. This work and the Removal Action design is expected to take one to two years. The Forest Service anticipates the companies will conduct the on-the-ground Removal Action in the 2023-2024 field seasons, at the earliest. Contaminated mine rock and any remaining ore from the site will be contained in an on-site repository. The repository will be covered with clean soil and engineered to protect human health and the environment. Mine openings will be closed. Remains of buildings and other mining equipment will also be removed during this process.

The comments, Forest Service responses, letter to the Respondents, final Administrative Settlement Agreement and Order on Consent and the rest of the Administrative Record can be viewed at:
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/tongass/landmanagement/projects/?cid=fseprd574452>

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